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■ PELHAM FOOD DRIVE

'Everybody chips in'

ALLAN BENNER
PelhamNEWS Staff

PELHAM — The shelves are once again full at Pelham Cares thanks to the generosity of residents as well as the hard work of about 250 volunteers.

The town held its annual food drive Saturday morning, ensuring the community's food bank will have enough food to last well into the coming year, said the organization's executive director Betty Brown.

see **FOOD DRIVE** | page 3

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Hundreds of volunteers helped collect and sort nonperishable food during Pelham's food drive, Saturday.

ALLAN BENNER Staff Photo



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upfront

■ **ISAAC RIEHL:** Outpouring of sympathy for grieving family of 14-year-old Pelham boy

'Bitter-sweet comfort'

ALLAN BENNER
PelhamNEWS Staff

PELHAM — "He's smiling."
"He's with his friends and he's smiling," Bonita Riehl says while looking at photographs of her son.

They're images of Isaac with his soccer team, with friends at Glynn A. Green Public School and at Camp Crossroads in Torrington, Conn., where the boy spent many happy summer days during the past few years.

Bonita has never seen many of those photographs before.

Not until after Isaac's death. "In every single picture he's being silly, he's smiling, he's got his arms wrapped around all his friends," she says.

Isaac's eyes almost shine from those pictures. They're full of life.

"He was just a humble kid who loved everybody," Bonita says. "He treated everyone with great respect."

In his 14 short years, Isaac was alive long enough to have had a profound impact on people.

He died on Oct. 22, five days after being struck by a car on Foss Rd. in Pelham, while riding his longboard with a friend.

Despite emergency surgery at McMaster Children's Hospital as well as the prayers of his family, friends and the community, Isaac could not recover from the catastrophic brain injury he sustained. He was taken off life support at 11:51 p.m.

Bonita says 1,400 people attended her son's funeral on Oct. 26 at Bethany Community Church in St. Catharines.

The sense of loss many of them felt was apparent — particularly among his many friends.

"It's creating a lot of turmoil in their own lives and hearts," she says. "Especially at 14. How many 14-year-olds have to carry their friend out in a casket?"

Bonita knew her son was extremely popular and well liked, but it wasn't until after his death that she learned just how loved he was.

"He was definitely a leader," Isaac has only been a student at E.L. Crossley Secondary School for less than two months, but the loss of the Grade 9 student had a profound impact on the school.

"After he was in the accident, even the teachers, they just couldn't cope. It wasn't just his one group of friends that were affected. It was just unbelievable."

Dozens of messages were left on Isaac's school locker from his many friends, and a book was left at the school where students could write letters to Isaac. They've since been given to Bonita.

She has a papier-mache mask given to her by a young girl — the sister of one of Isaac's friends. The girl told her all she could think about was giving it to her, Bonita recalls while holding the colourful mask.

"I can hardly fathom the

effect it's had on so many people. Strangers are coming to my door offering me things, telling me how their hearts are bleeding and how they're impacted," she says. "I can't even wrap my mind around the impact that this has had on people."

"There are so many things going on."

Initially, students and staff pitched in \$800 in donations to help cover expenses Bonita and Isaac's 16-year-old brother Jacob might incur while staying in Hamilton. Instead it has been donated to charity.

While still hopeful of a recovery, Isaac's friends made green T-shirts with "Stay Strong Isaac, The UnRiehl Fight" written on them. Other students took that idea and had bracelets made up with The UnRiehl Fight written on them, and sold them to raise funds for Ronald McDonald House and McMaster Children's Hospital.

They sold enough of those bracelets to donate \$3,025.50 to the charities.

In addition, donations made during Isaac's funeral service were donated to the two charities, Bonita says.

"That's just incredible to think that we were there (at Ronald McDonald House and McMaster hospital) for such a short period of time, and the support we're getting from family, friends, neighbours, strangers is wonderful to be able to give back to these two places."

In recent weeks, other students have been working towards obtaining funding through an organization called the Avira Community Fund, to build a skatepark in Isaac's memory.

Although Isaac was interested in longboarding — not skateboarding — Bonita is sure he would have loved it. Isaac loved sports.

He was a Toronto Maple Leafs fan and spent a season playing hockey, although it wasn't his favourite sport — that distinction was reserved for soccer. He had been playing The Beautiful Game since he was six years old.

"He didn't just like it, he had a passion for soccer."

Isaac built his dreams around soccer. He was a member of the Niagara United Youth Academy in Niagara Falls.

"It's like a major boot camp for soccer players. It teaches them all the skills required to be scouted out for future teams. His passion was to be a professional soccer player and this was his first year of entering the academy."

Isaac hoped he'd be scouted to play for the Toronto FC within two years, and then his dream was to earn a scholarship to Pennsylvania State University.

Ultimately, he had hoped to become a materials engineer and design sports clothing, equipment — "and especially soccer shoes."

It was last spring that Isaac



ALLAN BENNER PelhamNEWS Staff

Bonita Riehl holds a picture of her son Isaac, who died Oct. 22 after being struck by a car in the days preceding while riding his longboard.

developed an interest in longboarding.

Since last March he upgraded his longboard three times, using money earned by delivering *The Tribune*, his mom says.

"Five days before the accident he got his newest longboard." He was just a fearless child who gave it his all. He lived life large and he loved life."

When Isaac was younger, he once told her, "Mom, I love life so much. I never want to grow up," she recalled.

He was seven years old at the time.

A day before he was hit by the car, she said Isaac again told her something similar.

"He said, 'I love being older now. I love the kid I am, but I want to run and have

fun'... He was a kid at heart."

Bonita finds comfort in that memory.

"That actually is soothing to me."

Another aspect of the tragedy that offers Bonita "bitter-sweet comfort" is knowing that through the loss of her son, the lives of others have been saved.

Isaac's lungs were transplanted into the chest of a teenage boy from Toronto within an hour and a half of his death, while his liver and other tissues may also be used to save the lives of others.

Bonita says she'd like to meet that teenager boy.

She'd like to know if he loves soccer as much as her son did.

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■ FOOD DRIVE

Business gives helping hand

FROM PAGE 1

"The volunteer turnout has been tremendous," Brown said. "We have lots of food coming in."

Both the Fonthilli and Fenwick Lions clubs participated in the food drive, dividing the town up into 13 routes in western Pelham and 25 in the east. Volunteers set out from the two Lions halls, and spent the morning collecting food donations from nearly every home in town. All that food was then sorted at the old Pelham fire hall on Welland Rd.

While there were plenty of volunteers in Fonthilli, organizers could have used a few more in Fenwick.

"We could have used more youth," said Ken Angle, who was co-ordinating the routes for the western part of town.

He said there are usually more than enough teenagers eager to help out.

"Last year we had to turn people away," he added.

But the volunteers they did have in Fenwick worked hard enough to make up for the lack of manpower.

"They work a little harder on the west end of town," organizer Gerry Berkhout said, laughing.

"These guys are working their butts right off," Angle added. "It's just great."

"It's a wonderful day," Berkhout said.

While the bulk of the food goes to Pelham Cares, Berkhout said food is donated to Welland's three main food banks as well.

Meanwhile, Brown said the demand for the services Pelham Cares offers is also increasing.

"Every year we have new clients. People who are new to the area that need help," she said. "We probably have about 60 families that are registered with us."

Several area businesses pitched in too, including The Lazy Loon

FEEDING A NEED IN COMMUNITY

The Pelham Food drive assists:

Pelham Cares

Hope Centre

Open Arms Mission

Salvation Army



ALLAN BENNER Staff Photo

Volunteers unload a pickup filled with non-perishable food collected during the Pelham Food Drive.

restaurant, Tim Hortons, and Country Corner Market.

"It's overwhelming how the community comes together," Brown said. "Everybody chips in."

"Our motto is to do something for someone who is not as fortunate as you," Berkhout said. "That's the bottom line. And the Christmas Season is a good time to start. That's what Christmas is supposed to be all about."

Angle said some of the donations will be added to Christmas hampers as well as restocking the food bank.

"When they (Pelham Cares clients) see how much they're going to receive for Christmas, it's just unreal," Angle said.

allan.benner@sunmedia.ca

ALLAN BENNER Staff Photo
Jen Hooiveld, photo at right, has her hands full, helping sort food donations during the Pelham Food Drive Saturday.



ALLAN BENNER Staff Photo

Pelham Food Drive organizer Gerry Berkhout, left, talks to Betty Brown from Pelham Cares while she warms up chili to serve to volunteers.

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■perspective Impaired judgments put lives at risk

It was encouraging that Niagara police made 11 arrests for impaired driving during the first weekend of the holiday RIDE blitz. Getting drivers who have had too much to drink off the road is a good thing.

However, it would be even better if the campaign had netted no arrests and the police had given every driver the all-clear. Sadly, some people continue to not heed the message about the dangers of getting behind the wheel after drinking.

The statistics are alarming and tragic. According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, impaired driving claims the lives of between 1,250 and 1,500 people and leaves more than 63,000 hurt in Canada on average each year.

And it's all completely senseless. All because of someone who, after consuming alcohol, made the poor decision to operate a motorized vehicle. Cars, boats, snow machines — all potentially lethal weapons when put in the hands of an impaired driver.

We fail to understand the logic of such a boneheaded decision.

Is the money saved by not taking a cab worth putting people's lives at risk? Less importantly, is it worth the thousands of dollars you could pay in legal fees and fines, or losing your licence for an extended period or, worse, ending up behind bars?

For most of us, the answer to all of the above is simple: Of course not.

But, unfortunately, there are those who clearly have impaired judgment. And we hope police are vigilant in their pursuit of these individuals and that the justice system imposes the toughest penalties possible that will also act as a deterrent for others.

At the risk of stating the obvious, go ahead if you want to tip a few bucks, but for everyone's sake, leave the driving to someone else.

— Steven Gallagher
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■ COLUMN: Property tax explained

Assessment only part of the equation

Have you received your new property assessment notice from MPAC — the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation? Updated for the first time since 2006, your notice will outline MPAC's determination of the market value of your property as of Jan. 1, 2012.

MPAC considers many factors when assessing property values, such as the sale prices of comparable properties in your neighbourhood, and the age, location, characteristics and size of your property and home. In essence, MPAC strives to base their value on the amount your property could have sold for on the open market.

Just like in 2006, our assessment will remain the same for the next two years. However, if the value



DAVE
AUGUSTYN

MAYORAL VIEW

of your property increases, that increase will be phased in over the four years; if the value goes down, you will immediately see a reduction.

For example, if the value of your home increased by \$20,000 over its current assessment, the value for determining your property tax will increase by \$5,000 per year over the next four years.

If the value of your home goes up, does that mean that your property taxes will also go up?

No, not necessarily. Market

Value Assessment is only one half of the property tax equation.

The amount you pay to the Town of Pelham, to the Regional Municipality of Niagara and for education is based on the Market Value Assessment of your home multiplied by the three tax rates and added together.

See the town budgeted for revenues of \$10 million from property taxes in 2013. If all assessments double, the town would cut the tax rate in half to collect that \$10 million. If everyone's assessments went down, we would increase the rate to collect the same \$10 million.

But, what if your assessed value increases more than the average?

The property tax system is a bit of a blunt instrument. Municipalities set the tax rate based on the average assessment for each of the

tax classes — residential, multi-residential, commercial, industrial, farm/managed forests, pipelines.

If your property's assessed value increases more than the average you will likely pay more than the average tax. By the same token, if your assessed value increases less than the average, you will likely pay less tax.

What if you don't think the MPAC assessment on your property is correct? You can issue a "request for reconsideration" before April 1, 2013 so that MPAC will review your assessment.

Please check out your website (www.mpac.on.ca) and their notice for more information.

You may contact Mayor Dave Augustyn at mayordave@pelham.ca or read past columns at www.pelhammayor.dave.blogspot.com.

■ COLUMN

Tips for going ape at your next meeting

Once again, I've let a great idea slip from my grasp. I'm talking, of course, about monkey business.

Allow me to explain.

By now, I've been noticing how people at work behave like apes and monkeys. I had a boss, for example, who ambled around the office like a mandrill from southern Cameroon.

And for years, I've been scribbling down my trenchant observations on the back of napkins, gum wrappers and my left hand.

Unfortunately, it's incredibly easy to misplace old napkins and gum wrappers. And sometimes, despite my better judgment, I wash my hands. As a result, I don't have a single thing to show for all my hard work.

Then, and earlier this week, my spirits dipped even lower than normal when I checked my e-mails and discovered a press release promoting a new book about — you

gessed it! — the business lessons we can learn from monkeys.

According to the e-mail, the latest book by American author Heather Wandell is titled *Monkey Business: 37 Better Business Practices Learned Through Monkeys*.

"Heather Wandell has explored the connection between primate social behaviour and human conduct," states the press release. "Wandell believes that by studying the interaction between the primates, we can learn new strategies and develop solutions that will enhance our human relationships."

Of course, this is precisely the idea I've been working on for 25 years. (I'm not saying Wandell stole my idea, but not you to wonder if maybe I should've shredded those napkins and gum wrappers before I misplaced them.)

The press release goes on to state, "Heather has set (aside) a portion of every book sold to go directly to Frisky's Wildlife and Primate Sanctuary."



IAN
GILLESPIE
BUSINESS

Talk about stealing my thunder. In similar fashion, I planned to donate some of the proceeds from my book to a petting zoo, and some of the proceeds (about \$1.65) to a charitable agency that rehabilitates abused goldfish and then releases them into the wild.

But despite the appearance of Wandell's copycat book, I believe my insights into this topic are fresh and unique, and must be shared. So here, then, are just two of my monkey-inspired tips for business people:

Communal grooming: Chimpanzees (who are really just apes with some good connections to Hollywood) often sit around plucking ticks and lice from

each other's bodies. This activity increases the social cohesion of the group, and reduces itching.

I believe similar benefits can be gained in a business setting, although human participants may balk at eating the tiny critters they find on their co-workers.

Meetings: Most business people complain that meetings take far too long and accomplish far too little. Next time your company holds such a gathering, encourage everyone to dispense with awkward words and phrases — which are notoriously easy to misinterpret — and try to communicate with hoots, howls, whistles and barks. I guarantee that slapping the ground and swinging from the overhead lights will enliven even the most boring business meeting.

Finally, if you think these tips are silly, remember this: During the 2008 financial crisis, not a single monkey declared bankruptcy.

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IN BRIEF

RESIGNED
FROM UWAY

WELLAND — United Way of South Niagara operations and marketing director Jennifer Sinclair has resigned.

Information chair Dolores Fabiano said the board does intend to fill the position and search for a new executive director as soon as possible. In the

meantime, the United Way is expected to continue to operate normally.

SOPHIA LOREN
VISITING

NIAGARA FALLS — Oscar winner Sophia Loren is making a two-night appearance at Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort, March 27 and 28.

She'll discuss her six decades in Hollywood for the casino's continuing An Evening With... series. Tickets start at \$90, available through www.ticketmaster.ca.

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Get ready — Santa Claus is comin' to town soon.

Christmas in Pelham

Pelham News Staff

PELHAM — Santa Claus will make his way to Pelham this weekend in a parade put on by the town and Fenwick Lions.

The parade starts at Bethany Reformed Church, 1086 Balfour St. in Fenwick, at 1 p.m. and makes its way to Canboro Rd. and through the downtown core to Church St. on Saturday, Dec. 8.

Post parade celebrations take place at Centennial Park until 4 p.m. with hay rides, fire hot dogs, chili, and hot chocolate. Children can visit with Santa as well.

Before the Santa Claus parade in Fenwick, there will be Christmas celebrations at Peace Park, by Pelham city hall in Fonthill, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

There will be horse drawn hay rides from 10:30 a.m. to noon, A.K. Wigg primary choir performs at the Fonthill

bandshell from 10:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., Santa Claus will be in the bandshell from 10:45 a.m. to noon, business open house from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., hot chocolate and tumbis complimentary from Tim Hortons, pianist Frank Krahm performing at the Log Cabin from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m., harpist Dorothy Brown performing at Sapphires from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., Stealing Time performing at Shopper's Drug Mart from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Kirk on the Hill carolers performing at Sobey's, Holy Trinity Church carolers singing in downtown Fonthill, Fonthill Sparks and Brownies carolling in the Fonthill shopping plaza, Pelham Community Church carolers in Ridgville, E.L. Crossley carolers throughout Fonthill, Pelham Cares carolers at Lookout Ridge, Log Cabin, Pharmasave, the Lazy Loon, and Sobey's and Fonthill United Church Carolers throughout downtown Fonthill.

FIRE AT E.W. FARR

PELHAM — A youth has been arrested after a weekend fire at E.W. Farr Memorial School in Fenwick.

Niagara Regional Police say security cameras set up at the school recorded the actions of a youth on Sunday at about 4:45 p.m., setting fire to school property.

Police say the fire caused in excess of \$1,000 in damage before the fire went out by itself.

An NRP school resource officer conducted an investigation on Monday and identified a suspect. The youth, who cannot be identified under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, was arrested and charged with mischief under \$5,000.

Kinsmen Christmas to thank seniors

PELHAM — The foundation of the community was laid by those people who came before us.

The blood sweat and tears of today's seniors helped make our municipalities what they are today and the Fonthill and District Kinsmen don't want them to feel forgotten or left behind.

They want to thank them for their hard work with their annual Fonthill and District Kinsmen Seniors Christmas Party at Old Pelham Town Hall on Canboro Rd. in Ridgville on Tuesday, Dec. 11.

The doors open at 6 p.m. A free hot dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. The Celtic Fiddle Band will provide entertainment as well as a few other surprise guests.

Seats fill up fast, so register by calling 905-345-8268. Kevin Twomey, public relations officer for the Kinsmen, said it's a fun night to thank and remember everything seniors have done for Pelham.

"We want to assure them they still have a significant place in our community," he said.

Poinsettias a way to show thanks to seniors

FONTHILL — Nobody wants to feel forgotten and alone on Christmas — especially if their health is failing.

Fonthill and District Kinsmen understand that and want to show seniors they appreciate them and their contribution to the community.

Kevin Twomey, public relations officer for the Kinsmen, said the community should focus on the good things that surround them.

"The foundation for a lot of those things were laid by the builders, teachers and

volunteers form the previous generation," he said.

So, the Kinsmen will deliver about 200 poinsettia plants to seniors in Welland hospital's Woolcott Wing extended care unit on Saturday, Dec. 15, at 10 a.m.

They've done it every year for more than 30 years to make sure seniors and the community know how important and appreciated their efforts are.

"It's such a great thing to be a part of," Twomey said. "I love seeing the smiles on those people's faces."

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Public Meeting Proposed Regional Policy Plan Amendment 5-2012 To Implement the New Niagara Region Environmental Impact Study Guidelines

PROPOSED CHANGE

In October 2012 Niagara Region approved new Environmental Impact Study (EIS) Guidelines. The new EIS Guidelines outline EIS requirements, establish criteria for determining the appropriate scope and scale of work involved in an EIS submission, and outline the mandate for who is responsible for EIS submissions. An amendment to the Regional Policy Plan is proposed to implement new guidance contained in the 2012 EIS Guidelines. The amendment proposes to delete existing policies and a table related to EIS requirements, the required content and scope of EISs, and the mandate for EISs and replace them with a new table and new policies that provide clarity on scoping EIS requirements, that enable waiving of EIS requirements, and that reflect a transition in mandate related to EISs. The amendment also proposes housekeeping modifications to align terms with those used in the new EIS Guidelines. The amendment does not propose changes to any of the maps within the Regional Policy Plan.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Public input on this proposed amendment is welcomed and encouraged. You can provide input by speaking at the public meeting or by making a written submission to the Region. If you do not express your views through these avenues, you may be forfeiting your right to appeal Council's decision to the Ontario Municipal Board.

PUBLIC MEETING

This public meeting is being held under the provisions of Section 17 of the *Planning Act* at the following time and place:

DATE:	Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2013
TIME:	1 p.m.
LOCATION:	Niagara Region Headquarters - Campbell West Council Chamber 2201 St. David's Rd. Thorold, ON

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

To provide input in writing or to request personal notice if the proposed change is adopted, please send a letter c/o Acting Regional Clerk, Niagara Region, 2201 St. David's Rd., P.O. Box 1042, Thorold, Ontario L2V 4T7, or email janet.pilon@niagararegion.ca.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the proposed Amendment please contact Danielle De Fields, Senior Planner, by phone at 905-685-4225, ext. 3385, or email danielle.defields@niagararegion.ca.

A copy of the proposed Amendment and information and materials related to the Amendment are available for inspection in the Integrated Community Planning Department at the above address Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. and at www.niagararegion.ca.

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend and participate in meetings or events, please let us know in advance so that arrangements can be made in a timely manner. Special accessibility accommodations and materials in alternate formats can be arranged by contacting the Niagara Region's Accessibility Advisory Coordinator at 905-685-4225 ext. 3252 or accessibility@niagararegion.ca.

LEGAL NOTICE Section 17 of the Planning Act

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Regional Municipality of Niagara before the proposed official plan amendment is adopted, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Council of the Regional Municipality of Niagara to the Ontario Municipal Board.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Regional Municipality of Niagara before the proposed official plan amendment is adopted, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Municipal Board unless, in the opinion of the Board, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

If you wish to be notified of the adoption of the proposed Policy Plan Amendment, you must make a written request to the Regional Clerk and such request must include the name and address to which such notice should be sent.

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■ **COURT:** Michael Durant sentenced to life in prison

Durant guilty of murders

ALISON LANGLEY
QMI Agency Niagara

WELLAND — The families of Cassey Cichocki and Diane Dimitri gasped then broke into applause after the jury foreman stood in court and announced Michael Durant is guilty of two counts of first-degree murder.

The six-man, six-woman jury deliberated for almost 65 hours over seven days before reaching a verdict on the afternoon of Wednesday, Nov. 28.

Durant, dressed in a wrinkled green dress shirt and black dress pants, showed no emotion as the verdict was read.

Judge James Ramsay sentenced the 39-year-old Niagara Falls man to life in prison with no possibility of parole for 25 years.

Outside court, friends and families of the murdered women rejoiced.

"Guilty! Guilty!" one man yelled as he ran up and down the sidewalk

in front of Welland Superior Court.

Wilma Kyle, Cichocki's stepmother, was overcome with emotion.

"The past seven days have been torture," she said. "We have been on pins and needles. We were just praying."

She said she was grateful the jury looked beyond the fact that the murdered women were involved in the sex trade to fuel a drug addiction.

"They looked at these girls as human beings. They looked at them as our daughters."

Kyriacos Kyriacou, Dimitri's stepfather, added: "This has been a longtime coming. This has been a roller-coaster ride."

While nothing can bring back his stepdaughter, Kyriacou said the convictions can assist his family as they continue to heal.

"There is no closure," he said. "There will never be closure. But at least this is something that proves our system is working. We're taking a bad human being off the

MURDER TRIAL

Michael Durant, 39, has pleaded not guilty to two counts of first-degree murder in connection with the deaths of **Diane Dimitri**, 32, whose body was found Aug. 9, 2003, near the Niagara Falls city limits and **Cassey Cichocki**, 22, whose body was found Jan. 24, 2006, near Whirlpool Rd.

The trial in Welland Superior Court started Sept. 10.



Cichocki

Dimitri

streets so he will not do it again to anybody else."

Kyriacou, who is raising Dimitri's children, said he has been shielding them from media reports on the trial.

"I've been really keeping them away from the core of all this," he said. "They do know what's going on and I'm sure they will be very happy when I go home and tell them what

happened."

Dimitri was 32 years old in 2003 when she went to a party at Durant's Toby Cres. home in Niagara Falls.

During the trial, jurors heard she was hit in the head with a hammer. The murder weapon has never been found.

Dana Arnold, who was married to Durant at the time, said she came home to find a badly injured

Dimitri in their home. She testified Durant made her drive to a rural area near the boundary of Welland and Niagara Falls. That's where her body was dumped.

Durant's lawyer, Michael Lacy, maintained Arnold was a skilled liar who made up the story and that Dimitri's killer is her former boyfriend, a drug addict who later died of a drug overdose.

Cichocki's body was discovered in an isolated area in the north end of Niagara Falls in 2006. She was 22.

Crown attorney David King contends Durant incapacitated Cichocki in his Queen St. apartment, took her into the basement and beat her to death. The young woman suffered more than a dozen blows to the head.

Four drops of blood were found on the underside of a staircase leading to the basement.

The Crown maintains Durant cleaned the area with acid then applied a fresh coat of paint to the floors, top of the stairs and parts of the walls.



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Durant to appeal murder convictions: lawyer

TONY RICCIUTO
QMI Agency Niagara

Michael Durant's lawyer says he expects his client to appeal his two murder convictions in the deaths of two Niagara Falls women.

"Obviously, he was very disappointed with the result.

"The jury was out for seven days and I think, frankly, they obviously struggled with what to do," said Toronto lawyer Michael Lacy, who represented Durant during a trial that ended Wednesday after 2½ months.

"I think that if the charges had been tried separately — which was one of the motions we had brought up at the beginning of the trial — I think that would have frankly ensured that the jury wouldn't have used improper reasoning and rely on the fact that he was charged with two to come to a conviction," said Lacy.

Last Wednesday in Welland, the jury returned a verdict of guilty on two counts of first-degree murder in

connection with the deaths of Diane Dimitri, 32, and Cassey Cichocki, 22.

Dimitri's body was found in a ditch Aug. 9, 2003, and Cassey Cichocki, 22, whose body was found Jan. 24, 2006 in a wooded area in the city's north end.

The jury deliberated for nearly 65 hours over a seven-day period.

Justice James Ramsay sentenced Durant, 39, of Niagara Falls, to life in prison with no possibility of parole for 25 years.

"We have a lot of respect for Justice Ramsay and his decision that these cases were to be tried together. We think that was a legal error, and we think it was a significant legal error and that will be a main focus on the appeal," said Lacy.

In addition, he noted that at the beginning of the trial, the stepmother of one of the victims advised the judge she knew one of the jurors socially, including through karaoke performances.

"The Crown and I both submitted that in the circumstances, we should

discharge that juror and replace the juror, and if necessary replace the jury because of the potential connection.

The trial judge, Justice Ramsay, decided not to do that even though both the Crown and the defence had suggested that he do that," said Lacy.

"And that will also be one of the grounds of appeal that we will be pursuing," said Lacy.

After a verdict, either the defence or Crown has 30 days to file an appeal notice with the court of appeal.

"I know both families are anxious to have closure in this case, but we have maintained from the very beginning that trying these two cases together was fundamentally unfair to Mr. Durant and frankly we think the verdicts reflect that," said Lacy.

Durant was arrested in 2006 and has remained in custody since that time.

tony.ricciuto@sunmedia.ca



Michael Durant is seen in this undated photo. Durant, 39, was convicted of first-degree murder in the deaths of Diane Dimitri and Cassey Cichocki.

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 Dunnville Community Lifespan Centre
 275 Ramsay Drive, Dunnville, Ontario

December 17th
5:00-8:00pm
 West Lincoln
 Wellandport Community Centre
 5042 Canborough Road, Wellandport, Ontario

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■ **PELHAM PLANNING:** Mayor shares optimism with chamber members

Augustyn anticipating town's future

MARYANNE FIRTH
Tribune Staff

PELHAM — Pelham has seen much positive change over the past two years, with more to come.

That's the message Mayor Dave Augustyn shared with members of the business community Tuesday, Nov. 27 during a Welland-Pelham Chamber of Commerce breakfast held at the Lazy Louie Restaurant in Fonthill.

Augustyn began by outlining the significant projects the town has successfully championed in recent years, including the construction of a new Fenwick fire hall, reconstruction of Halst St. and the adoption of the town's new official plan.

The official plan encourages residential intensification downtown

and allows greater flexibility for live-work arrangements, particularly in east Fonthill, Augustyn said. The plan includes identification of the East Fonthill Secondary Plan area — 180 hectares from Regional Rd. 20 along Rice Rd. to past Merritt St.

The east Fonthill lands could accommodate 5,000 people over the next 20 years and include potential for new medical facilities, he said.

Town council has petitioned the minister of health for one of two proposed south Niagara Health System urgent care centres. There are doctors within the town working to assemble a new family health team and ancillary services, and a UCC could work well into that plan, Augustyn said.

Communities need more local health-care options and services, he

said, which is why council is pursuing the UCC and assisting with new a family health team.

Along with health care, council has also put a focus on recreation, culture and wellness, with plans to decide in 2013 on the future needs of the town in those sectors, Augustyn said. The goal is to see this done early in the new year, he added.

The town has earmarked \$1 million in its 2013 capital budget for "pre-development studies" should council decide to move forward with new and/or revamped facilities, he said.



Augustyn

ties, he said.

There are more changes to come in Pelham's future, with the revitalization of downtown Fenwick in 2013 at a cost of \$2.1 million in conjunction with the community's 160th anniversary.

The project will see Fenwick's downtown become more pedestrian-friendly, hydro lines buried and the historic flagpole enhanced.

Pelham may also have a skateboard park in its future, in memory of 14-year-old Pelham skateboarder Isaac Riehl who died in October after being hit by a car.

Students at E.L. Crossley Secondary School have championed the project and are attempting to gain funding from the Aviva Community Fund, an online contest through Aviva Insurance.

Town council has committed to matching dollars donated by the fund, should the bid for the project be successful. To vote for the project in the national funding competition, visit www.avivacommunityfund.org/ideas/acf15773 beginning Dec. 3.

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■ HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL: Crossley's Maria Gearing

Celebrating the best of girls basketball

BERNIE PUCHALSKI
QMI Agency Niagara

Last weekend was a celebration of Niagara girls basketball at several locations across Ontario.

At the OFSAA double A championships in Sauli Ste. Marie, St. Francis won the gold medal after winning bronze last year and Centennial made it to the quarter-finals. At the single A finals in Pain Court and Chatham, Jean Vanter defended its OFSAA crown. And at triple A championships in Lakeshore and Essex, the Governor Simcoe Redcoats made it all the way to the semifinals.

University scouts can't help but be impressed by the sheer volume of highly-touted prospects in Niagara and this Wednesday at St. Catharines Collegiate will be the last chance to see some of these players in a high school setting. On that date, the annual Niagara All-Star games will be held featuring the 11th- to 20th- best players in Zones 3 and 4 playing in the first game at 7 p.m. followed by the 10 best players from each zone squaring off at 8:15 p.m. A three-point

shooting contest will take place following the first game.

Among the all-stars representing Zone 3 at the showcase is Maria Gearing of the E.L. Crossley Cyclone.

"The game is important to provide a showcase for the best players in Niagara and to recognize them for their outstanding efforts during this past season or during their four years of high school," organizer Dante Pirillo said. "It also serves as a celebration/send-off for those local players who will be playing in their final high school game and are off to pursue a spot on a university or college team."

Each high school coach was asked to nominate three players and the final selections were made by committee which looked at: performance; calibre of opponents; team success; and, recognizing a player's final high school year. The committee also tried to be inclusive and have as many schools as possible represented in the games.

St. Catharines CYO Basketball Association is sponsoring the games for the eighth consecutive year and admission proceeds will be

donated to Women's (Gillian's) Place in St. Catharines.

■ COMMUNITY

Search for the top citizen

PELHAM — Pelham is full of dedicated volunteers who give hundreds of hours of service to the community to help make it the best town it can be.

Fonthill and District Kinsmen want to recognize one of those individuals who makes a difference with its 15th annual Pelham Citizen of the Year Award.

The Kinsmen are looking for nominations for the 2012 award.

The nominee must live or work in Pelham and stand out for their contributions.

Nominees must be 21 years old or older, not a member of any branch of the Kinsmen Clubs of Canada and is financially compensated for his or her political activities.

Mail nominations to P.O. Box 906 Fonthill, L0S 1E0.



MARYANNE FIRTH Staff Photo

Niagara College second-year digital photography student Jessica River poses in a photo booth set up by her class Friday to help raise funds for the school's Movember campaign.

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NOTICE OF DRAFT SITE PLAN AND NOTICE OF FINAL PUBLIC MEETING

To be held by Niagara Region Wind Corporation regarding a Proposal to Engage in a Renewable Energy Project

Project Name: Niagara Region Wind Farm

Project Location: The proposed project is located within Haldimand County and Niagara Region (including the Townships of Wainfleet and West Lincoln and the Town of Lincoln). The electrical interconnection components are located within the Town of Lincoln and the Township of West Lincoln, in Niagara Region, and in Haldimand County in southern Ontario.

Dated at Haldimand County and Niagara Region this 5th of December 2012.

Niagara Region Wind Corporation ("NRWC") is planning to engage in a renewable energy project in respect of which the issuance of a renewable energy approval is required. The distribution of this notice and the project itself are subject to the provisions of the *Environmental Protection Act* (Act) Part V 0.1 and Ontario Regulation 359/09, as amended, (Regulation), which covers Renewable Energy Approvals. This notice is being distributed in accordance with Section 15 of the Regulation prior to an application being submitted and assessed for completeness by the Ministry of the Environment. This Notice of Draft Site Plan is in reference to the inclusion of a new substation for the Project. The other substation and all turbine locations, as well as noise receptors, remain the same. The legal effect of the publishing of this Notice is such that pursuant to Section 54(1.2) of the Regulation, NRWC does not have to take into account a noise receptor as defined by the Act that did not exist as of the day before NRWC published the Draft Site Plan for the Project.

The project team will be holding a series of Public Meetings, as required under section 16(1) of the Regulation. The purpose of these meetings will be to present the final details of the Draft Renewable Energy Approval (REA) Reports, and to present proposed revisions to the Draft Site Plan, released in August 2012. We are offering multiple meeting locations and dates for this event. The sessions will be drop-in style, and each session will be identical so that you can attend whichever session is most convenient:

Tuesday, February 5, 2013	Wednesday, February 6, 2013	Thursday, February 7, 2013
Town of Grimsby 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Peash King Centre Auditorium 162 Livingston Ave. Grimsby	Town of Pelham Old Pelham Town Hall 491 Canboro Road Ridgville	Township of Wainfleet Firefighters' Memorial Community Hall 31907 Park Street Wainfleet
Town of Lincoln 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Bled Hall 4650 South Service Road Beamsville	Township of West Lincoln Wellandport Community Centre 5042 Canborough Road (Rt#63), Wellandport	Haldimand County Lowbanks Community Centre 2633 Northshore Drive Lowbanks

Project Description:

Pursuant to the Act and Regulation, the facility, in respect of which the project is to be engaged in, is considered to be a Class 4 Wind Facility. If approved, this facility would have a total maximum name plate capacity of 230 MW consisting of 77 turbines (80 potential locations identified). The project location is shown in the adjacent map.

NRWC has been refining the project location and completing technical and environmental studies in preparation for finalizing the project layout. The proposed revisions to the Draft Site Plan include amending the location of the electrical interconnection components further south to accommodate a new location for a second substation. The results of the noise modeling meet the current provincial standards with mitigation. The proposed revisions are incorporated in the Draft REA Reports (see list below) and will be discussed at the Public Meetings.

Documents for Public Inspection:

The applicant, NRWC, has prepared supporting documents in order to comply with the requirements of the Act and Regulation. Written copies of the draft supporting documents will be available for public inspection starting December 5, 2012 to February 5, 2013 at the locations listed below and on the project website (www.nrwc.ca):

- Draft Project Description Report
- Draft Construction Plan Report
- Draft Design & Operations Report (Includes Property Line Setback Assessment Report and Noise Study Report)
- Draft Decommissioning Plan Report
- Draft Natural Heritage Assessment & Environmental Impact Study Report
- Draft Environmental Effects Monitoring Plan
- Draft Water Assessment and Water Body Report
- Draft Protected Properties Assessment
- Draft Heritage Assessment
- Draft Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment
- Draft Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment
- Draft Wind Turbine Specifications Report

Document Viewing Locations:

Town of Grimsby Public Library, 160 Livingston Avenue, Grimsby
Grimsby Public Library, 18 Carnegie Lane, Grimsby
Haldimand County Municipal Office, 45 Munsee Street North, Cayuga
Cayuga Public Library (Haldimand), 28 Cayuga Street North, Cayuga
Haldimand County Dunnville Satellite Office, 111 Broad Street East, Dunnville
Town of Lincoln Municipal Office, 4800 South Service Road, Beamsville
Lincoln Public Library (Fleming Branch), 4956 Beam Street, Beamsville
Region of Niagara Municipal Office, 2201 St. David's Road, Thorold

Project Contacts and Information:

To learn more about the project, or to communicate questions or comments, please contact:

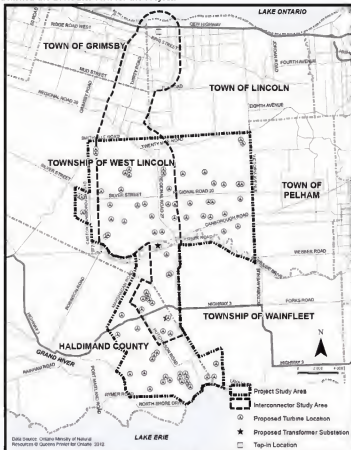
Project Email Address: info@nrwc.ca

Project Website: www.nrwc.ca

Robert Daniels, Vice President
Niagara Region Wind Corporation
277 Lakeshore Road East, Suite 211
Oakville, ON L6J 6J3

Town of Pelham Municipal Office, 20 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill
Pelham Public Library, 43 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill
Township of Wainfleet Municipal Office, 31940 Highway #3, Wainfleet
Township of Wainfleet Public Library, 31909 Park Street, Wainfleet
Township of West Lincoln Municipal Office, 318 Canborough Road, Smithville
West Lincoln Public Library, 318 Canborough Road, Smithville
Wellandport Public Library, 5042 Canborough Road, Wellandport
Castorville Public Library, 9549 York Street, Castorville

J.A. (Al) Leggett, BA, MCIP, RPP
Project Manager, Stantec Consulting Ltd.
300 - 675 Cochrane Drive West Tower
Markham, ON L3R 0B8



The "Project Study Area" was established to scope the siting of the proposed wind turbines, collector lines, access roads and temporary work areas. The "Interconnector Study Area" was established to scope the location of the proposed 115kV transmission line, transformer substations and tap-in location. The "Project Location" occurs within these areas, is identified in the Draft REA reports and will be presented at the public meetings.

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■ **HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL:** Lynx victory at OFSAA extends south Niagara winning streak to four

Jean Vanier defends Ontario championship

BERND FRANKÉ
PelhamNews Staff

Niagara's French Catholic high school didn't have home-court advantage in any of its games at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations girls single A basketball championships in Chatham.

In the end, the Jean Vanier Lynx wound up with something much better than that — a home away from home in the winner's circle.

For the second time in as many years the small school with a large enrolment area that includes Pelham scored early, and scored often enough, to take a home-court crowd out of the game and capture the sport's biggest prize.

It was 'deja vu' of last year's final in St. Catharines for Lynx head coach Tara Poulin. As was the case when Ridley College hosted the provincials, Vanier was facing a hometown hopeful when it faced ecole secondaire de Pain Court for the gold medal Saturday night.

"They filled up the stands quite a bit, so we had to be home-court killers again," Poulin said.

Alex Spadaro, who went on to score a game-high 16 points in the win, netted four early buckets that effectively made cheering for the host team a non-factor in the champion-

ship final.

Vanier, which went 5-0 at the tournament, overcame a rough second quarter against Pain Court by regrouping for a strong finish.

Poulin, who has been coaching some of the players since they began competing in Grade 7 in Vanier's elementary wing, felt confident the Lynx could defend their title after defeating L.J. Lajeunesse in the semifinal round.

"I felt they were the second-strongest team at the tournament," she said of the French Catholic high school from Windsor.

The win over Lajeunesse also emphasized that Vanier's OFSAA second OFSAA championship in as many years was the result of "the whole team" and not just the starting five. After a strong defence started taking the ball from the hands of the Lynx' top scoring threats — Sarah Dillon, Brooke Murdoch and Spadaro — sisters Alysha and Katelyn Fontaine each scored eight points.

"Without Alex and Sarah's scoring, we don't win games. Without Brooke's defence, we also don't win games. But without everybody contributing, we don't win OFSAA," the coach said.

"It's definitely the whole package with this team."

Dillon added 11 points for the Lynx in the final and



MARK MALONE OMI Agency

Jean-Vanier Lynx's Brooke Murdoch (23), Sarah Dillon (24), Katelyn Fontaine (21) and Tori Badawey (25) celebrate their gold medal win over the Pain Court Patriots at the OFSAA 'A' girls basketball championship Saturday at St. Clair College's Thames Campus HealthPlex in Chatham.

Murdoch contributed seven. Spadaro, who was the team's manager in last year's title run an ineligible to play after transferring from Grimsby Secondary School, had 12 rebounds in the gold medal game.

This year's OFSAA championship is an early graduation present for the nine Grade 12 students on the Vanier squad. Poulin said the graduating seniors sensed that the three-day, 16-team tournament in Chatham marked the end to

their high school careers.

"They all wanted to give it their all. That's what makes this one so special," the coach said.

Vanier also defeated Breslau's Woodland Christian, 57-10; Rainy River, 68-12; and Hamilton's Guido de Bres,

48-21, on its way to extending Welland's championship streak in single A girls basketball championships to four years. Confederation won back-to-back titles in 2009 and 2010.

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■ **LABOUR:** Parents worried if schools are closed■ **CANADIAN FORCES:** Ornament sales to aid troops' families

Teachers strike Monday

PelhamNEWS Staff

DON FRASER
QMI Agency Niagara

ST. CATHARINES — Becky Western thinks the world of her kids' elementary teachers and their tireless work behind the scenes.

She knows they have the best interests of her children, Bryn, 9, and Tywyn, 7, at heart.

We will engage in respectful, meaningful bargaining at any time."

Sharon Aloian

But the threat of a strike by the province's public elementary school teachers has her on edge. District School Board of Niagara said last week, Thursday, Nov. 29, it will be forced to close schools for students' safety should there be a full teachers work stoppage.

"I certainly admire the work the teachers are doing," said Western. "I have no beef with them. My concern is I'm a single mom with two kids," said the midtown resident in St. Catharines, who works for Credit Counseling of Regional Niagara.

"What do I do with my kids (in a strike) and how do I keep them moving forward with their curriculum? That's my concern — and also that there could end up being kids falling through the cracks."

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario has announced teachers and unionized school staff will be in a position to strike at any of Thursday through the province next month, and will provide parents 72 hours' notice of job action.

However, Education Minister Laurel Broten emphasized last Thursday the Ontario government has the legislative tools to end any such work stoppage.

She stressed short of saying how quickly she would bring down the hammer of Bill 115.

The union has said the

strikes are in protest of Bill 115, the controversial legislation that allows the provincial government to quash strikes and impose wage-freeze agreements.

"It is unfortunate that we have been placed in the position of having to strike... but we will provide parents with ample notice to ensure the safety of students," union president Sam Hammond said in a statement.

"By her actions, the minister has let everyone down by stripping teachers and education professionals of their democratic rights, and shutting down recent talks at the provincial level."

ETFO is one of several unions in the province taking the Dalton McGuinty government to court over the legislation, arguing it's an unconstitutional assault on their collective bargaining rights.

ETFO Niagara local president Sharon Aloian said there's no firm strike date at this point, but a work stoppage will not happen Monday.

"I will all depend on whether or not the minister, the government, wants to sit down and negotiate," she said.

"We will engage in respectful, meaningful bargaining at any time," she said, adding any strike would be provincially.

In Niagara, the public secondary school teachers also rejected a tentative collective agreement reached earlier between their union and District School Board of Niagara. That group, like the elementary public teachers, has begun job action that so far includes restricting administrative tasks.

— with files from QMI Agency

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Todd Dennison

The stores are selling \$7.99 Christmas ornaments, and donating the proceeds to the Canadian Armed Forces Military Families Fund.

"It's a great way for Sears to give back to our Canadian Armed Forces team," said Welland Sears general manager Todd Dennison.

"This is a stressful time of year for any family, let alone for Canadian Forces members out there and their spouses."

Sears is holding its Operation Wish Day on Dec. 4 to offer military personnel the same staff discount that Sears employees receive.

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Tribune photo

Welland Sears manager Todd Dennison holds a Christmas ornament being sold to raise money for families of Canadian military personnel.

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■ SCHOOL UNIFORMS: Trustees OK plan for standardized dress

Catholic elementary students going blue and white

DON FRASER
QMI Agency Niagara

ST. CATHARINES — Jayseen Adams is about to get a share of blue and white — and he's not exactly embracing his makeover.

On Tuesday, Nov. 27, Niagara's Catholic school board approved a standardized dress code for its elementary students.

The following day, Jayseen, 8, and his mom went clothes shopping at the Gymboree clothing store inside the Pen Centre for a fitting and price check. Jayseen is heading to Grade 5 at Michael J. Brennan School in North St. Catharines next year.

He'll be among those Niagara Catholic District School Board students having to follow a new policy in September basically requiring navy blue pants and a white or navy blue top.

"I don't think we should have it," he said, voicing concerns about the look kids will be subjected to.

But his mom, Rita Adams,

has warned to the idea.

She is a Brock University student who works part time for Niagara's public health department.

"Cost is definitely a huge thing," the 28-year-old said. "Being able to put a lump sum down to purchase all his clothes at once would be nice."

"And I think it would be good against bullying, as well. Everyone's wearing basically the same thing, nobody can bully based on the (clothing brand) you're wearing."

Inside the outlet, Gymboree manager Sherie Hogan laid out a pile of code-compliant garb.

Ultimately, the Adamses go for a white long-sleeved golf shirt and navy blue cord pants.

Hogan said these clothing lines are high-quality and are pre-shrunk with adjustable waistlines.

The cost would be about \$12.50 for the shirt and \$18 for the pants.

Adams is pleased with the price and quality and likes the look. On wearing the outfit, the son's verdict on the wardrobe

improves.

"I feel old," he said sheepishly, "but now I kind of want to buy them."

School board vice-chair Moe Charbonneau said a recent price survey shows costs can be kept even lower. Without revealing stores surveyed, Charbonneau said it showed corduroy navy blue pants were in the range of \$10 to \$15 and an appropriate shirt about \$6 to \$11.

The Catholic board also stresses that during the review process and consultation with parents, changes were made. They include broadening acceptable clothing items and offering used-clothing exchanges. And parents or guardians will be able to shop wherever they like.

The board will eventually be issuing a request for proposals from prospective vendors.

It will result in a list of suppliers' dress code-and-price acceptable clothing for elementary students that parents can opt to select.

don.fraser@sunmedia.ca

■ SCHOOL UNIFORMS

DON FRASER
QMI Agency Niagara

WELLAND — A standardized dress code for elementary school students sailed through Niagara's Catholic board of trustees.

Trustees voted 7-1 on Tuesday, Nov. 27 to approve a policy essentially calling for navy blue pants and a white or navy blue top.

In a pre-vote discussion, trustees generally applauded the move, with some reservations.

"As this policy has grown and widened, I am not at all in opposition to standardization across our schools," trustee Ted O'Leary said.

"Once we have it, we begin to accept it ... It becomes part of our life."

Trustee Rhianon Burkholder said she was skeptical at first.

"I've watched it evolve to become something that's not only financially feasible, but also does standardize — and makes everybody inclusive," she said.

Trustee Father Paul MacNeill voiced strong reservations and called for a recorded vote.

MacNeill saw a standardized dress code as "external" to core issues the board should be concerned with.

"It's not really central to who we are as Catholic educators; I'd be looking for much more unanimity across our system."

"I found the feedback was immediate and vocal, that there was opposition," MacNeill said. "Yes, there were people in favour of it as well ... (but) I certainly think for me there's enough opposition to say, 'Let's just put the brakes on it here.'"

The board also approved an amendment nixing a proposal prohibiting elementary students from registering who do not comply with code expectations.

It agreed the issue is already covered in a policy statement that parents are advised or code expectations before registration.

The dress code will be reviewed no later than June 2014.

Two school parents' delegations spoke in advance of the Niagara Catholic District School Board vote in Welland.

One group of four opposed it. Among their concerns was

the lack of a vote by parents and guardians, and hardship for families in need having to buy the required clothes.

"Our children's bond to their school community is strong," Sarah VanDerLee said.

"It will be devastating if even one child loses out on a faith-based education because of this policy."

Michelle Zappitelli, however, said she hadn't spoken to an affected child who disagrees with the idea.

"The dress code provides children with a level playing ground," she said. "The ability to buy from a variety of retailers makes this very easy for all families."

The school board has also spoken to critics' concerns, citing assistance and clothing swaps for families in need.

Over the review process, it broadened the scope of acceptable attire.

During Tuesday night's meeting, Board vice-chair Maurice Charbonneau stressed parental involvement and consultation by letters to affected families was a key part of the process.

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DRESS CODE HIGHLIGHTS

Standardized dress code recommended policy for Niagara Catholic elementary students

- Essentially calls for navy blue pants and a white or navy blue top.
- It includes a navy blue dress, cargo, kobe or corduroy-style pants with the additional option of skirts or dresses.
- Shorts or capris can be worn. Pant, skirt or dress length must be "appropriate and modest." Denim is permissible.
- Navy-blue sweatpants are OK for students from the early years to Grade 3.
- Grade 8 students have the option of wearing grey secondary uniform pants.
- Navy blue or white oxford or polo shirts or school-designed spirit wear would be permitted.
- They may wear long or short-sleeved oxford or polo shirts, the school-designed spirit-wear or school-designed sweaters or hoodies.

DRESS CODE NOTES

- Starts September 2013.
- Among other requirements — a prohibition on bandanas, and all visible body piercing excluding a stud in the nose.
- Hairstyles and colour "must be styled in a way that is not distracting or conspicuous." It says, adding only natural hair colours will be acceptable.
- Hats and hoods cannot be worn inside schools.
- No advertisements of any kind will be allowed on dress-code items.
- Staff will implement a progressive discipline process, as needed, to ensure acceptance of the code. That process, which begins with three reminders, could eventually lead to a suspension.



Region chooses investment over reducing taxes

JEFF BOLICHOWSKI
QMI Agency Niagara

The prospect of a balanced budget proved more enticing than tax cuts to regional councillors last week.

Council's budget committee waved off the prospect of cutting its capital budget down Thursday, Nov. 28, voting 21-4 to put \$1.8 million in money from rate programs into the Region's 10-year building plan, shunning some councillors' hopes of using the cash instead to lower taxes.

That means a 1.97% tax increase for Niagarans, roughly \$25 for the average household. But it also means sustainability, argued Lincoln Mayor Bill Hodgson.

"We've been playing a catch-up game and every mayor knows that's what we're doing," he said, pointing the finger at cities for focusing on tax cuts over infrastructure in the 1980s and 1990s.

He chastised councillors for trying to foist off infrastructure costs on future generations for lower taxes now.

"It's all on our kids. It's all on our grandkids," he said.

"If we don't pay today for sustainability, it's not sustainable."

The debate followed a procedural boondoggle sparked last month after councillors backtracked on their approval of Port Colborne Coun. David Barrick's move to use the cash to reduce tax increases.

Regional staff came back Thursday with a list of projects they could snip from the capital budget. But some councillors balked when the prospect of delaying work on a new interchange at Highway 406 and Third Ave. came up.

"We don't want, or at least I don't want to micromanage," said Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor Dave Eke.

"For the life of me, I cannot imagine that this is one that is at the bottom of the list."

And St. Catharines Coun. Tim Rigby warned that kicking the can down the road has consequences.

"If there are any deferrals of these or taking money out of this year's budget, it's going to postpone other future projects as you go along," he said.

"I think we've been doing that for far too long."

He said Region officials lobbied heavily for the interchange at their annual Niagara Week outing to Queen's Park.

“

We are paving, step by step, the road to prosperity."

Coun. Brian Baty

He said delaying it would send the province a bad message.

Councillors followed the vote by passing the 2013 budget unchanged, despite a fusillade of weakly supported motions from council's fiscal hawks. The operating and capital budgets must still be approved by regional council.

A plan by St. Catharines Coun. Bruce Timmins to divert about \$370,000 from the Niagara Regional Police budget was defeated in a 17-7 vote. And a move by Barrick to have capital projects go to the audit committee for review was amended and then shot down.

In the end, the operating budget passed with only St. Catharines Coun. Andy Petrowski opposed.

"This is not affordable for a great deal of Niagarans," he said. "We suffer more than almost any other community."

He said Niagarans divert more of their income to taxes than most. The average percentage in Ontario is 3.9%. Here it's 4.3%.

But Pelham Coun. Brian Baty said dollars go further here. And, he said, we're struggling but still below most jurisdictions in terms of tax rates.

"We are paving, step by step, the road to prosperity," he said.

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Hearing for NRP officer delayed again

DAN DAKIN
QMI Agency Niagara

A Niagara police officer facing
six counts of discreditable conduct

dating back to incidents in 2010 has
had his tribunal delayed again.

Niagara Regional Police Const.
Greg Keldson is facing six charges

under the Police Services Act in
connection with two separate incidents
that took place in April 2010.

The two issues first came before
an NRP disciplinary tribunal in
November of that year, but have
been adjourned several times since.

A hearing was scheduled for
the morning of Wednesday, Nov.
28 in St. Catharines, but Keldson
was unable to attend for "personal
reasons."

Insp. Scott MacLean, who is serving
as the prosecutor in the case,
said he was satisfied the reason
Keldson couldn't attend was serious
enough to warrant another adjournment
to Dec. 11.

"None of the parties involved in
this matter are pleased it's
adjourned again, but we accept the
fact this is a special circumstance,"
he said.

LL

**None of the parties involved
in this matter are pleased
it's adjourned again, but
we accept the fact this is a
special circumstance."**

Insp. Scott MacLean

Keldson is still on normal paid
duty with the NRP.

The tribunal Wednesday was for
two counts of discreditable conduct
related to an incident on April 25,
2010.

MacLean said Keldson allegedly
used "profane, abusive or insulting
language" when making an arrest
and allegedly "abused his authority
in issuing a provincial offence
notice" to the person he was
arresting.

Keldson is also scheduled to
appear at a separate hearing, sched-
uled for Feb. 18 to 20, to face four
additional counts of discreditable
conduct stemming from an incident
April 15, 2010, when he allegedly
swore at someone and used unne-
cessary force while carrying out an
unlawful or unnecessary arrest.

MacLean said it's not unusual for
cases like these to be drawn out.

"Administratively, sometimes it's
just very difficult to pull together all
of the people involved in a situation
and to get it prepared for a hearing,"
he said.

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■ **HEALTH CARE:** NHS hopes to save \$1M a year with new lighting, heating

Hospitals become energy-efficient

ALLAN BENNER
PelhamNEWS Staff

WELLAND — It was the right thing to do.

And Greg Kuzmenko said Niagara Health System found a way to do it without costing the taxpayers anything.

"It's really about the right thing to do in terms of energy and taking advantage of all the new technology that's available to save dollars. Basically, the project is paying for itself," said Kuzmenko, NHS regional director of engineering.

"We're almost finished. We're already saving the dollars now."

The initiative includes new high-efficiency lighting, as well as new heating systems and heat recovery devices.

In Welland's hospital alone, NHS installed more than 5,000 fluorescent lamps and 137 exit lights "with



SUPPLIED PHOTO
Greg Kuzmenko, Niagara Health System regional director of facility management, and Riley Mackey, construction manager at Ecosystem, stand next to one of the new boilers for domestic hot water in the extended care unit at Welland hospital.

these new LEDs that last forever and use almost no energy."

Those changes alone cut the health system's energy costs for lighting in half.

"Other things we've done are installing heat-recovery systems, new boilers were



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installed that are high-efficiency, and overall we're reducing energy by about 28% on the project, overall," he said.

Those savings only include retrofitting work done to older sites — not the new St. Catharines hospital that was designed to meet LEED standards (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design).

"We're talking about huge savings," he said. "It's a no-brainer."

In addition to saving as much as \$1 million a year across NHS facilities, Kuzmenko said the project is environmentally friendly.

He said the health system began working towards the changes about six years ago, looking at ways of making its hospitals more efficient.

The initiative was given government approval about three years ago, and work began in about 2011.

"You have to be careful when you affect the physical plant of any hospital," he said. "It took a long time and a lot of careful planning."

Kuzmenko said the NHS has launched an educational campaign for hospital staff and visitors about what they can do to save energy, too.

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